

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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New Zealand Domestic Media Release

Nelson's Pīhopa Retreat Named New Zealand's #1 Hotel by Condé Nast Traveller UK - for the Second Year Running

The intimate six-suite retreat holds a perfect sweep of the world's most coveted travel accolades - bringing global recognition to Nelson Tasman and to New Zealand's luxury accommodation sector for the second consecutive year.

NELSON, NEW ZEALAND - Pīhopa Retreat, a luxury boutique hotel tucked away just minutes from Nelson's city centre, has been voted New Zealand's #1 Hotel in the UK Condé Nast Traveller Readers' Choice Awards 2026 - ranking #9 in Australasia and the highest-placed New Zealand property.

Condé Nast Traveller is widely regarded as the world's most authoritative voice in luxury travel, and more than 900,000 readers voted across its UK and US editions this year.

This is the second consecutive year Pīhopa has claimed the top position - a recognition that reflects the consistency of experience Sarah Mellor and her team deliver to every guest. In the US edition, Pīhopa ranked #6 in Australia & New Zealand.

The accolade places Pīhopa firmly on the global stage, alongside the world's great intimate luxury hotels and lodges, and marks a defining moment for New Zealand's luxury tourism sector. An independently owned six-suite retreat, Pīhopa ranks alongside international names including Ritz-Carlton, Capella, The Fullerton and The Langham.

The recognition does not stand alone. Pīhopa Retreat holds a perfect 10/10 on Booking.com - a flawless score calculated across every verified guest review over three consecutive years - TripAdvisor's Best of the Best (top 1% of hotels worldwide), and Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier rating - a complete sweep of travel's most respected accolades, across editorial, peer, and guest review platforms.

"In extensive global travel, never have we experienced such a high level of gracious and attentive service. Pīhopa Retreat personifies the ultimate luxury travel experience."

- Michael F, Guest

A Retreat Unlike Any Other

Set on a historic estate dating back to 1859, Pihopa Retreat comprises just six private suites within 5.5 acres of heritage gardens - including 100-year-old protected landscape trees and neighbouring a 2.4-hectare reserve. It is, by any measure, one of the most extraordinary city-centre hotel settings in the country.

Hosted by Sarah Mellor and her team, every detail of a guest's stay is considered and deeply personalised - in a way that only a six-suite retreat can achieve. Restaurant reservations are arranged in advance with complimentary taxis to and from Nelson's city centre. Evenings begin with complimentary drinks and canapés served poolside. A curated selection of wines and cocktails, freshly baked afternoon treats, and a sumptuous chef-prepared breakfast served in the historic 1877 chapel complete the picture. Between it all, guests wander at their own pace - pathways weaving through heritage plantings, native birds overhead, the stillness of a place that feels entirely, gloriously private.

"Breakfasts in the chapel were straight from the garden, scrumptious and totally decadent."

- Guest, Pihopa Retreat

It is this calibre of unhurried, genuine hospitality - something the world's grand hotels are rarely able to offer - that has earned Pihopa an extraordinary depth of guest loyalty, with many returning season after season from across New Zealand, Europe and the United States.

A Moment of Pride for Nelson Tasman

The Nelson Tasman region is officially New Zealand's top-rated destination, earning the #1 spot in the nationwide Domestic Visitor Satisfaction Survey with an outstanding rating of 8.9 out of 10.

For the Nelson Tasman region, Pihopa's accolades represent more than a single property's success - and more than a single year's achievement. Two consecutive #1 rankings from Condé Nast Traveller UK bring sustained international attention to Nelson as a destination. The retreat sits at the gateway to three of New Zealand's most spectacular National Parks - Abel Tasman, Kahurangi, and Nelson Lakes. The region's world-class food and wine, coastal scenery, arts culture, and outdoor adventure offer the perfect complement to the Pihopa experience.

Demand for the retreat has grown steadily and organically, with near-full occupancy achieved through the summer season - a testament to the consistency of experience that Sarah and her team deliver year-on-year.

New This Season

Pihopa Retreat's new Wellness Centre - incorporating a massage studio, reformer Pilates, sauna and ice bath - opened in Winter 2026, further strengthening the retreat's offering for guests seeking restoration alongside exploration. The team has also planted 3,000 native trees on the property this winter, with a new walking trail and curated journeys through the emerging forest landscape - both reflecting the constant desire to refine and elevate the guest experience, and to deepen the

sense of sanctuary that defines every stay. The suites have also been refreshed for the new season, with new paint, curtains and furnishings.

Luxury with a Light Footprint

Pīhopa Retreat is carbon positive certified, a Kaitiaki member of the Brook Waimārama Sanctuary, and a signatory of New Zealand's Tiaki Promise - a commitment to care for the land, sea, and community. The retreat holds both Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier Sustainable Tourism accreditation, placing Pīhopa among the country's most rigorously verified sustainable operators, independently benchmarked against Global Sustainable Tourism Council standards. Everything the retreat does is guided by the desire to have as low an impact as possible on its extraordinary surroundings.

Reservations & Rates

Pīhopa Retreat is bookable direct at www.pihoparetreat.nz. Given near-full occupancy through the peak summer season (November–April), early booking is strongly recommended.

About Pīhopa Retreat

Tucked away in a tranquil pocket just minutes from Nelson's city centre on New Zealand's South Island, Pīhopa Retreat is New Zealand's most acclaimed small luxury hotel. Six private suites set amid 5.5 acres of heritage gardens on a historic estate dating to 1859. Highest-ranked New Zealand hotel in Condé Nast Traveller UK's Readers' Choice Awards 2026 (#9 in Australasia) and second-highest in the US edition (#6 in Australia & New Zealand) - for the second consecutive year. Perfect 10/10 on Booking.com (three-year verified score). TripAdvisor Best of the Best (top 1% globally). Qualmark 5-Star and Gold Tier Sustainable Tourism accreditation, verified against Global Sustainable Tourism Council standards. Carbon positive certified and signatory of the Tiaki Promise.

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